

## President's Corner Climate, Weather, and the Precautionary Principle

by Mark Johnson

That science has become a matter of faith is disturbing. I have conducted a very unofficial poll and have found that some "believe" and some do not that the Earth is warming. Since global warming is on a truly massive scale, it is impossible to use personal experiences in any meaningful way to gauge the issue. So it seems that many believe people they trust in to provide the answer. This trust follows political persuasions. But why would anyone trust politicians? This baffles me.

It stands to reason that only those with experience in the field of climatology without bias should be the experts whom we trust. Many lines of evidence seem to point to the same

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# The Maryland Yellowthroat

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## 2012 MOS CONFERENCE OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND • FEBRUARY 24-26

Something new: Our Winter Conference brought new vistas, new birds, new faces. Despite high winds, rain, snow flurries, and tornado warnings, it turned out to be a very successful endeavor. What we did not have was a pelagic trip; the pelagic was cancelled before noon on Friday because of wind. But 190 people still had some excellent birds, 134 species by Bob Ringler's official count.



*This Lark Sparrow on Assateague Island pleased many a conference-goer. Photo by George Jett.*

Kathy Calvert did her usual magnificent job arranging field trips and trip leaders. Thank goodness Kathy and I had decided to offer pelagic participants back-up trips in case of cancellation. Sure enough, when the pelagic was scrubbed people were all set to go on their all-day trips. Given the high winds, I think everyone was happy the boat trip was cancelled.

Kathy had the inspired idea of having the Ocean City Inlet manned by experts during the morning and afternoon throughout the weekend. People could drive down there at their convenience to see what was being seen and stay as long as they liked. It turned out to be very popular, a "social thing" to do. Plus, the inlet produced some excellent birds, including at least five Harlequin Ducks and Razorbill, as well as Long-tailed Ducks, Red-throated and Common Loons, and

oystercatchers. All three scoters were present on Sunday. And an Iceland Gull (or two?) was seen at the inlet as well as near the hotel.

Assateague Island was another productive site. As reported in Birds of Note (page 8), most conference-goers got to see a Saw-whet Owl there, and a Lark Sparrow known to be at Assateague turned out to be two Lark Sparrows. Two Common Teal were at the West Ocean City Pond, and birders scanning the ocean from the hotel balcony spotted Northern Gannets.

Everyone appreciated the efforts of the field trip leaders and Kathy under often adverse conditions; evaluations showed the trips were a conference highlight. This was Kathy's last year as conference field trip coordinator.

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## CORRECTION

The March/April *Yellowthroat* article about the new Piscataway Sanctuary was not altogether correct. As Don Messersmith points out, “The last paragraph contains some editorial comments that are not my own words. The money for the signs and future shelter came from MOS members who donated to a memorial fund that was set up in Bill Kulp’s memory after his death. Bill did not live long enough to ever visit this site. The idea for the signs came from his friends.”

— Don Messersmith  
MOS Historian

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*Anyone is welcome to contribute articles, photos, or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be e-mailed to Richard Donham by July 20, 2012 for the September/October 2012 issue.*

*Illustrations pp. 1, 4 ©M. Suzanne Probst  
Photograph p. 1 ©George Jett  
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Photograph p. 9 ©Bill Hubick  
Photographs p. 14, 15 ©Colin Rees et al.*

President's Corner *continued from page 1*

conclusion: a century of tide readings, oxygen isotope information of ancient ice cores, subsurface sea temperature readings, satellite photography of ice sheets and polar caps all suggest the Earth is warming at an incredible rate. This warming is also being experienced as climatic changes in community compositions; this is affecting disease prevalence which in turn is affecting amphibian populations at specific elevations in tropical mountains. With many vectors pointing in the same direction, why the controversy?

Simply, there are many aspects of science that cannot be tested, particularly questions of large scale, whether it be in time or space (e.g., evolution). All but very controlled laboratory investigations can have alternative explanations. All cannot be known; not every hypothesis can be tested. Alternative explanations and skeptical suggestions can be helpful, but ignoring patterns in the data is the polar opposite of science.

In some European jurisdictions, politicians have realized this and have

come to rely on the precautionary principle to help guide regulation. This is an idea that suggests if you don't exactly know everything, then play it safe. This makes intrinsic logical sense. It also makes sense that it is unlikely that releasing ~200 million years of sequestered carbon to the atmosphere won't cause any adverse climatic outcomes. In this case, however, it seems that many without experience in climatology are disputing the evidence (for a good read see *Merchants of Doubt*, by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway). If one follows bias (e.g., who has the most to gain), clearly the fossil fuel and many other large industries have much to gain by disputing the impact of carbon on the greenhouse effect. I forecast that scientists will soon have another line of evidence: that birds are arriving earlier on their breeding grounds. This may be advantageous for some species by extending their breeding season, but for many that depend on sand bars, rising sea levels may mark their end. I sincerely hope that logic prevails over bias.

## So long, farewell, auf wiedersehen, goodbye...

It is with mixed feelings that we bring our years of *Yellowthroat* teamwork to a close. Putting together the MOS newsletter has been a source of much satisfaction, and we have enjoyed this stellar opportunity to work with and get to know a great many wonderful MOS members. We cannot go without hearty thanks not only to the regulars—**Jean Wheeler, Les Roslund, Andy Martin, Helen Horrocks, John Hays Christy**—but also to the many other persons who have been so generous with their time, their articles, their ideas, and their photographs. It is good to know that the *Yellowthroat* will be in good hands with **Richard Donham** and **Eric Skrzypczak**.

We look forward to seeing you—along with some nice birds—in the field!

—Lydia Schindler and Sue Probst

## BIRDATHON SUCCESS PROPELS YOUTH TO WORLD SERIES

BY GEORGE RADCLIFFE



Following a successful Birdathon in March, nine YMOS birders are headed to the World Series of Birding in Cape May. Thanks to many generous pledges and donations, almost \$1,500 was raised toward youth expenses for the New Jersey competition.

On March 17 and 18, a group of 8 dedicated YMOS birders spent a total of 25 hours in the field tracking down as many species as they could find. The hunt began in southern Worcester County at 5 AM Saturday morning with a King Rail calling and ended at 5 PM Sunday just as the elusive White-breasted Nuthatch

sounded off in Talbot County. With many species starting their northward trek early and the incoming species still on the way, it was difficult at times finding their 100 must-see species. Adding to the challenge was a dense fog that settled in over the coast, making sightings all the more difficult. Nonetheless, the group was able to find 105 species, including 92 of their must-sees. Several of the missed species were either lost in the fog or by all accounts just not present. In addition to the Virginia's Warbler at Pickering Creek, some of their best finds included Long-billed Dowitcher, American White Pelican, and a Northern Gannet half way across the Chesapeake Bay.

The funds will help send two middle school teams and a high school team to the World Series competition. The students come from Charles, Baltimore, Harford, and Queen Anne's Counties. They will travel up to the Cape May area on Wednesday, May 9, for 3 days of scouting and then take part in the Big Day on Saturday, May 12. The competition is a great experience for the kids and a wonderful learning opportunity for them. Once again, special thanks to the MOS members who made this experience possible with their pledges.

**Conference** *continued from page 1*

She is going to be missed by everyone but me most of all. It has been such a pleasure working with her.

Maryanne Dolan ran another successful Silent Auction and Raffle, enabling MOS to donate \$1,600 to the Maryland Coastal Bays Foundation. Maryanne had rounded up some wonderful raffle items. Ellen Lawler donated one of her drawings—a Brown Creeper. Wendy Olsson obtained binoculars from REL. Jean Fry put together a gift basket with items worth over \$800. Way to go, Jean! It was also due to Jean's efforts that so many Tri-County Bird Club members helped with the conference. Thank you to all of them; they certainly made a difference. And thank you to Maryanne for her help and innovations while handling the Silent Auction and Raffle. She is another person I will miss next year. Maryanne has been running our Silent Auction and Raffle since 2004, but she is stepping down and moving on; she is the new MOS Education Chair.

On Friday evening, we were very lucky to have Dave Brinker from the Department of Natural Resources as

our keynote speaker. He chronicled his own work with Northern Goshawks in several states; he had some great photos and he did a very nice job describing the finer points of goshawk ID. Dave also arranged for a special, all-day trip to Assateague Island for 15 fortunate people. Using two DNR vans with drivers, Dave took the participants on an Off-Road-Vehicle trip to areas not open to the public. A wonderful experience for everyone involved. Thank you, Dave, for helping to make the conference a success.

With everyone's help, this turned out to be a fun conference. The evaluations indicate that people enjoyed being in Ocean City for winter birding, even with often difficult conditions. It's obvious we will have to do this again in a few years. Excellent birds, wonderful people, and a great time; I'm looking forward to the next winter conference. We might even have a pelagic trip that isn't cancelled.

— Janet Shields  
*Conference Committee Chair*

**Our 2013 Conference  
will be held at the  
Ramada Conference Center  
Edgewood, Harford County  
Memorial Day Weekend  
May 24-26**

**\*\*\*HELP NEEDED\*\*\***

As you can tell from the Ocean City Conference Report, I need two new members for our Conference Committee. I'm looking for a **Field Trip Coordinator** and someone to run the **Silent Auction/Raffle**. Anyone interested should contact me.

**Janet Shields**  
**janetbill@prodigy.net**  
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### FREDERICK COUNTY

When *John Christy*, in the Florida Keys in January, and *Lydia Schindler*, in St Augustine, were e-mailing one another about getting the March *Yellowthroat* on line, they found they'd both be heading home to Maryland in early March—and blithely said, “See ya on I-95.” So how come it was such a surprise when they both ended up at the same McDonalds in Nowheresville, Georgia?

### HARFORD COUNTY

The trip was advertised as “Chile & Argentina: Birds & Wine,” and it was being led by Alvaro Jaramillo, author of *Birds of Chile*. I love birds and I'm fond of wine, so how could I resist? Alvaro's Adventures was definitely a different kind of birding trip. Birding was often intense, but then we'd have a day or half-day of wine tasting. In addition, we learned a lot about the history and culture of the two countries; Alvaro was born in Chile, though because of the dictatorship his family emigrated to Canada where he grew up.

The trip began in Santiago. Heading east to the Andes and the Yesso Valley, we saw Crag Chilia, Moustached Turca, Mountain Parakeet, and Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, among others. Next we went south to the northernmost Southern Beech-Patagonian habitat, where Magellanic Woodpecker and Green-backed Firecrown put on quite a show. Heading northwest to Santa Cruz, we had a wine-tasting day, visiting three wineries. Traveling to the coast, we birded near the mouth of the Maipo River, then it was off to another winery before spending the night at Viña del Mar. In La Compana NP we had a

cooperative Dusky Tapaculo, Austral Pygmy Owl, and a fantastic Giant Hummingbird. We headed back to the coast to take in Humboldt Penguins at Cachagua. The next day was a great pelagic out of Valparaiso; Buller's Albatross was new to most.

Then it was time to cross the Andes into Argentina. The pass through Los Andes with views of Mt. Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas, was breathtaking. We spent two nights in mountain cabins, where Red-tailed Comet was just outside our door. Next it was on to Mendoza and some of the best wine-tasting. Lunch at Club Tapiç consisted of a four-course meal, with a different wine complementing each. Monk Parakeets were nesting in trees outside and we overlooked the mountains and vineyards. We birded the Mendoza area for a day and a half before heading back over the Andes to Chile. The final birding adventure found us slogging through wetlands at Lampa near Santiago looking for South American Painted Snipe. No luck! We took in one final winery.

The trip to Easter Island or Rapa Nui was wonderful. We visited many of the archeological sites and stared in wonder. How did the Rapanui move these huge Moai such distances over such rough ground, let alone stand them up? All land birds have been introduced, but a pelagic to three islets or motus yielded five life birds. For the trip I saw 207 birds with 100 life birds!

—Jean Wheeler

### HOWARD COUNTY

*Shashi Lengade* certainly knows how to celebrate the New Year. While visiting relatives in India, she decided that a natural side trip would be a safari in Kenya. The trip was actually a birthday present from her husband. With an entourage of relatives, she headed for Kenya. There, she visited Masai Mara NP; it has the largest population of lions in Africa and all of the other large mammals. Shashi visited Lake Naivasha and Abedare and Mt. Kenya National Parks, where she enjoyed sunbirds and weaver birds, as well as the starlings with their brilliant metallic plumage in green, blue, and purple. Sashi did not

need an alarm clock because she had White-browed Robin-Chats to wake her at 5:30 sharp each morning. Her favorite bird was the Black Crowned Crane, but with Lilac-breasted Rollers, Blacksmith Plovers, kingfishers, and so many more, it was hard to choose. Shashi picked up 105 species. When she hit her first 50, she celebrated with a bottle of wine. At 100 species, she opened champagne at the Mount Kenya Safari Club on New Year's Eve. A very happy new year indeed.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, *Gayle* and *Bill Hill* enjoyed a 10-day trip to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in early January. The Black-vented Oriole at Bentsen SP was their first priority, and they were not disappointed; within minutes of arriving they saw the oriole as it foraged for insects along the tree trunks. The feeding stations at Bentsen provide a colorful look at valley birds like Green Jay and Common Kiskadee, and the Clay-colored Thrush is now easily seen on a daily basis. They later searched for a Golden-crowned Warbler at the Frontera Audubon Sanctuary. Eventually, their feet told them it was time to quit walking, so they found a bench where they thought the warbler might be. A short time later Gayle started hearing a chip note that sounded interesting, and soon thereafter the Golden-crowned Warbler came into view. In spite of its reputation as a skulker, it eventually provided them with close, unobstructed views as it hopped across the path and along the top of a log. Who says you can't see good birds while sitting on your duff? Heavy morning fog greeted them at the Salineño boat ramp on the Rio Grande River but they were still able to see two fly-by Muscovy Ducks. This is the easiest place to see Audubon's Orioles during the winter, and Altamira and Hooded Orioles are also present; this year the star attraction was a Brown Jay. At South Padre Island, which always provides some interesting deviations from birds normally seen in “the valley,” the highlight was a very photogenic immature Black-legged Kittiwake. The drive over to SPI provided an opportunity to look for Aplomado

Falcons, and Gayle and Bill saw an unbanded pair near a nest site. One has to wonder how much longer it will be before these birds are countable?

—Kate Tufts

#### MONTGOMERY COUNTY

*Paul Pisano*, at the airport heading back to Denver, sent the following hasty highlights from the February Audubon Naturalist Society trip to Cuba: “1) Meeting Orlando Garrido, the author of the Cuban field guide and key to what we know about Cuban ornithology. We visited him at his home in Havana and he gave us a great lecture about the Cuban endemics. 2) Seeing all the possible endemics of Cuba—25 species. There are 3 other endemics, but they are either extinct or near extinct and impossible to see. 3) Accompanying two other birders as they each hit their 4,000th bird—Don Messersmith and Alan Knue. 4) Having great guides, both Cuban (William Suarez) and American (Mark Garland). 5) As for birds, highlights were: our first full morning of birding, on the west coast (Guanahacabibes), being surrounded by new birds, including the smallest bird in the world, Bee Hummingbird; seeing Blue-headed, Gray-fronted, and Key West Quail-Doves in the same binocular field; and too many other great sights to list.”

*David Strother* asked rhetorically: When does a life bird become a trash bird? “Well, they don’t really, but sometimes it can seem like it. Some years back, when Toni and I were birding in SE Arizona, we were particularly looking forward to seeing a Painted Redstart. By the time we had walked the length of the long, narrow parking lot at Ramsey Canyon, we had seen so many Painted Redstarts that we looked forward to seeing some other birds, any other birds. It was an odd feeling to realize that within not many minutes, the object of our search had become common. Similarly, the prospect of seeing a hoopoe will lead many of us to travel afar for just that reason. Not only would it be a life bird, but it’s a fascinatingly unusual creature, as evidenced by all

the hoopoe-themed stamps issued by many countries ([www.bird-stamps.org/species/91001.htm](http://www.bird-stamps.org/species/91001.htm)). At my sister’s finca in eastern Portugal, hoopoes are everywhere. The woods in the rolling countryside echo with their resonant whoop-whoop-whoop calls. Every morning, shortly after sunrise, one was on the ridge of the tiled roof serving as our alarm clock. Often, early in the day, there would be one sitting on the window ledge looking into our bedroom to ensure that we were up and about. When it comes to hoopoes, it’s hard to get too much of a good thing!”

*Bob Mumford* wrote: “With a North American list in the 760s, it’s really hard to add a life bird. To add three in just over three weeks is almost impossible, but that’s what we accomplished in late December and January.” First, he and his fiancée, Chris Smith, flew to San Francisco to visit her daughter over the New Year’s holiday. As soon as they got their rental car at SFO, they raced up to Colusa NWR northwest of Sacramento, where a Falcated Duck had been seen for a few weeks. After a few tense hours, the duck appeared and Bob was able to take some nice photos. Upon their return to Maryland, Bob learned of the Barnacle Goose on the Eastern Shore and the Hooded Crane in Tennessee. Bob made two trips over to Chestertown and on the second saw the goose far out in the river, and later in a field near the road. When it flew over, Bob was able to photograph it. After this adventure, Bob and Chris drove to Hiwassee State Refuge where the Hooded Crane was hanging out with thousands of sandhills. On the second day there, the crane flew past and Bob got a 10-second look. “Not very satisfying, but enough to make the tick.”

*Gerry Hawkins* (who swears he’s a business lawyer, not a professional ornithologist) has written an article on the molts and plumages of ducks that was published in the December 2011 issue of *Waterbirds*, an international ornithological journal of waterbird

ecology and conservation. The article, “Molts and Plumages of Ducks (Anatinae): An Evaluation of Pyle (2005),” *Waterbirds* 34: 481-494, presents an hypothesis for the evolution of molts and plumages of ducks and classification of these molts and plumages under North American molt terminology that differs from that proposed in an article written by Peter Pyle in 2005, “Molts and Plumages of Ducks (Anatinae),” *Waterbirds* 28: 208-219.

*Gail Mackiernan* wrote that she and *Barry Cooper* took advantage in February of a “great package deal” from BWI to Grand Bahama, which included flights and four nights in a luxury hotel. “But the object was not lolling on the beach or by the pool, it was birds! Although only 55 miles from Florida, GB has endemic and specialty species not found on the US mainland, such as Bahama Warbler, Bahama Yellowthroat, LaSagra’s Flycatcher, Red-legged Thrush, Western Spindalis, Cuban Emerald, etc. Of interest to Maryland birders is that the race insularis of the Brown-headed Nuthatch, found only on GB, will probably be split. Unfortunately in the two big hurricanes in 2004/5 a lot of their pine habitat was destroyed and they are now extremely rare. Despite looking for two days in the ‘right place’ we didn’t see them. Well, another time! We saw lots of wintering warblers (about 15 species). The most common migrant “non-warbler” passerine was Gray Catbird. In all we totaled 75 species in 3 days’ birding, of which about 20 were Bahamian or Caribbean endemics. It is interesting that birds that are common on Grand Bahama, such as the beautiful Red-legged Thrush (an endemic subspecies that may be split) and Thick-billed Vireo, rarely show up in Florida. For birders looking to add some new birds to their lists and not obsessive about their being in the USA, 3-4 days on Grand Bahama is a great way to get some Caribbean sunshine, turquoise water, and excellent snorkeling as well as the birds!”



## A FRESH LOOK FOR MILL CREEK SANCTUARY

On Sunday morning, March 25, eight members of the Talbot County Bird Club spent 4 hours repairing and spiffing up the club's Mill Creek Sanctuary (just off Rte 50 on Rte 662 near Wye Mills). The workers that misty morning were *Jan Reese*, who organized the work day, *Herman Espenhorst*, *Les Roslund*, *Danny Poet*, *Wayne Bell*, *Dave Palmer*, *VinceDeSanctis*, and *Terry Allen* (and they were serenaded as they worked by two newly arrived Louisiana Waterthrushes.)

"One of our two main objectives was to move and repair a foot bridge that had been dislodged and washed 25 feet from its proper location by flood waters during a storm a few years ago," writes Terry. "I am happy to report that five strong-backed members were able to lever the bridge out of the sand it had imbedded itself into and return it to its rightful place and function. Our other objective was to clean and tidy up the entrance and parking area. Leaves

were racked, wood neatly stacked, trees and noxious shrubbery trimmed, and trash and debris removed."

Most important for visitors is that the gate to this area has been rehinged and realigned to work properly and should afford easier access to the parking lot. The gate is not locked, it just has to be opened by lifting it over the pin at the bottom of the post on the non-hinged end.

If you visit Mill Creek Sanctuary, which Talbot invites all to do, just lift and open the gate to enter the parking area. As you walk down the hill you will see the reinstalled foot bridge. The boundaries of Mill Creek to the south of Rte 662 were clearly marked last year. The boundaries to the north of Rte 662 have not been, but plan to do so in the near future. When you leave, please be sure to close the gate securely by lifting the gate over pin in bottom of post.

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### Chapter Chatter *continued from page 5*

This just in from long-time chapter member *Tom Marko*, now living in Okinawa: During the period March 12-16, Tom and his birding photographer friend Dan Smith "left the sub-tropical environs of Okinawa and headed north to the snow-covered and frozen-sea prefecture of eastern Hokkaido, Japan. The Hokkaido 'Big 4'—Red-crowned (Japanese) Crane, Steller's Sea Eagle, White-tailed Sea Eagle, and Blakinston's Fish Owl—were easily ticked within the first 12 hours of arrival. Along the coast, waterfowl and gulls in breeding plumage numbered in the thousands and were in easy viewing distance in open water or fishing-boat harbors. Waterfowl included Whooper Swan, Northern Pintail, Common Pochard, and Greater Scaup. Gulls included Black-tailed, Common, Glaucous-winged, Glaucous, Iceland, Vega, Slaty-backed, and Black-headed. We cruised an inshore pelagic trip that netted Common, Pigeon, and Spectacled Guillemots and Ancient Murrelet. Along the sea cliffs we observed Pelagic, Red-faced, and Great Cormorants. Unfortunately, Tufted Puffins, the only lifer for Dan, turned out to be decoys on one of the sea cliffs. Passerines of note included Great Spotted Woodpecker, Eastern Great Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Eurasian

Nuthatch, and Asian Rosy-Finch. Overall, 46 species were observed, including eight life birds for me."

—Chris Wright

### TALBOT COUNTY

*Liz and Harry Armistead* visited California's Great Central Valley November 16-20, 2011. "From my brother's deck in downtown Davis we saw a White-tailed Kite and 33 Yellow-billed Magpies going to roost, plus Scrub Jays, Black Phoebe's, and Anna's Hummingbirds. Bear in mind: the countless waterfowl seen below are a couple of weeks before their usual peaks. We visited Sacramento NWR; about one-third the size of Blackwater, it had these numbers (refuge estimates) of waterfowl: 166,000 Snow and 90,000 Greater White-fronted Geese, 26,500 coots, 34,100 Green-winged Teal, 28,000 shovelers, and 306,000 pintails (we stopped counting after 99,999). This is the most impressive bird spectacle I've ever seen, surpassing my previous favorite, countless thousands of seabirds off the coast of New South Wales in August 1959. At the next refuge, Colusa NWR, less than 5,000 acres, the estimates included 27,000 white-fronts, 28,000 pintails, 12,000 wigeon, and 12,000 shovelers. I'm leery of most refuge

estimates but these California ones are believable. It was nice to see Wrentits, Audubon's Warblers, White-throated Swifts, Golden-crowned Sparrows, and California ground squirrels, too. A 3,395-word report, already inflicted on the Talbot Bird Club e-mail list, is available. Request at [harryarmistead@hotmail.com](mailto:harryarmistead@hotmail.com)."

It did not go to an exotic place nor record a dramatic species count, but it was an enjoyable and productive bird walk. During the annual meeting of an international association in New York City, *Cathy Cooper* arranged a field trip, "Birding and Nature Walk in Central Park." Nineteen of the conference's attendees spent a couple of hours on Sunday morning walking the paths and admiring the features of the park and, of course, looking for birds. "With a local birder guiding us, we logged 23 species. With participants from at least nine states and three European countries, even the cardinals and Blue Jays were exotic to some. This walking field trip was a nice change of pace from the other, more expensive, extended trips. The guide asked that his honorarium be sent to a bird conservation organization, so there were winners all around."

—Karen Harris

## MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT AS OF MARCH 24, 2012

BY PHIL DAVIS, MD/DCRC SECRETARY

The MD/DCRC has reached the following record decisions since the last committee status report was published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. This report covers MD/DCRC review package 141. MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of *Maryland Birdlife*. New “state” species include Cassin’s Sparrow for Maryland. This brings the number of species on the Official List of the Birds of Maryland to 440.

More information on the MD/DCRC can be found on the committee’s web pages at the following URL:  
[www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html](http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html)

### MD RECORDS ACCEPTED:

**White-faced Ibis**, *Plegadis chihi* [MD/2011-202]

Trutts Landing, Girdletree, Worcester County  
16-Jul-2011 through 21-Jul-2011

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**, *Dendrocygna autumnalis* [MD/2011-164]

Patterson Park, Baltimore City, Baltimore County  
03-Jun-2011 through 07-Jun-2011

**Purple Gallinule**, *Porphyrio martinica* [MD/2011-153]

McKee-Beshers WMA (Hughes Hollow), Poolesville, Montgomery County  
02-May-2011 through 22-May-2011

**Purple Gallinule**, *Porphyrio martinica* [MD/2011-165]

North Beach marsh, North Beach, Calvert County  
04-Jun-2011 through 06-Jun-2011

**Cassin’s Sparrow**, *Peucaea cassinii* [MD/2010-158]

Point Lookout State Park, Scotland, Saint Mary’s County  
26-Sep-2010 through 27-Sep-2010

### MD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

**Brown Booby**, *Sula leucogaster* [MD/2009-072]

Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin, Worcester County  
24-Jul-2009

**Brown Booby**, *Sula leucogaster* [MD/2009-073]

Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin, Worcester County  
25-Jul-2009

**Brown Booby**, *Sula leucogaster* [MD/2009-076]

Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin, Worcester County  
28-Jul-2009

**White-faced Ibis**, *Plegadis chihi* [MD/2010-131]

Trutts Landing, Girdletree, Worcester County  
30-Jul-2010

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**, *Dendrocygna autumnalis* [MD/2010-153]

Potomac River, Potomac, Montgomery County  
02-Sep-2010

**Purple Gallinule**, *Porphyrio martinica* [MD/2010-069]

72nd Street and Assawoman Bay, Ocean City, Worcester County  
08-Jul-1991

### DC RECORDS ACCEPTED:

**American Avocet**, *Recurvirostra americana* [DC/2011-204]

Anacostia River  
20-Jul-2011

### DC RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

**Magnificent Frigatebird**, *Fregata magnificens* [DC/2010-133]

Hains Point  
04-Aug-2010

## MD/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE NEWS



The 2011-2012 Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee. L-r: John Hubbell (DC), Mikey Lutmerding (Prince George’s), Bill Hubick (Chair, Anne Arundel), Joe Hanfman (Howard), Matt Hafner (Harford), Phil Davis (Secretary, Anne Arundel), Stan Arnold (Anne Arundel), Walter Ellison (Kent), Sherman Suter (Calvert), Gwen Brewer (Charles), and Tyler Bell (St. Mary’s). Photo by Barbara Davis.

The 2012 Annual Meeting of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) was held on 10 March 2011 at the home of the Secretary, Phil Davis, in Davidsonville, MD. A detailed annual business report and set of minutes has been published on the committee’s web page at [www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html](http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html).

**Review List Changes.** The committee made several changes to its review lists, posted on our web page, including adding Northern Goshawk to the Maryland and DC review lists and restoring Brewer’s Blackbird to the Maryland list; both are now reviewable if seen anywhere in Maryland. Roseate Tern was also moved from review Category 4A (reviewable if seen away from coastal Worcester) to Category 2, which makes it reviewable if seen anywhere in Maryland.

**Reporting Form.** The committee adopted some improvements to its current reporting form, based on suggestions from observers and a review of best practices of other records committees. The modified reporting form has been posted to the committee’s web page.

**Elections.** Members completing their terms were Tyler Bell, Gwen Brewer, and Mikey Lutmerding. The committee thanked them for all their efforts over the past years. The newly elected members are Patty Craig (St. Mary’s), Rob Ostrowski (Anne Arundel), and Dan Small (Queen Anne’s). Bill Hubick was re-elected as the Chair and Phil Davis was re-elected as the Secretary.

—Phil Davis, MD/DCRC Secretary





## Birds of Note – by Les Roslund

- Maryland birding in February 2012 featured first-ever state records of not one but two species, much to the delight of hundreds of birders. On Feb 15 two of the top birders in the region, Jim Stasz and Ed Boyd, started the parade by reporting a “probable” VIRGINIA’S WARBLER on the grounds of Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot County. Through diligent effort combined with great patience over several hours, Jim succeeded in attaining photographs of the key field marks, and the species was confirmed. The bird was quite secretive and fidgety. It stayed low in groundsel bushes or other shrubs when in view and had great capacity for moving unseen from bush to bush. Eventually people learned to recognize the soft call of the bird as it foraged, and that became of great help for the numerous birding groups that came to Pickering Creek in hopes of a sighting. This bird clearly liked the habitat it had found. It stayed close to where it had first been seen until at least March 18, and it was being seen nearly every day, though often requiring several hours of effort. VIRGINIA’S WARBLERS are known to winter mainly in Mexico but casually along the coast in southern and central California. Though there are a few reports of the species appearing as a migrating vagrant in eastern North America, this may be the first confirmed record of the species wintering in this part of the country.
- While Maryland birders were wildly pursuing the VIRGINIA’S WARBLER, another new species showed up. Early in the afternoon of February 20, a PINK-FOOTED GOOSE within a large flock of CANADA GEESE in Howard County caught the eye of Nick Lund of Howard County. This bird was first seen near the intersection of Jones Road and Hipsley Mill Road just north of Patuxent River SP. Nick took pictures of the bird that were sufficient to clearly confirm its identity. For the next four days there were numerous additional sightings of the bird, but after that it apparently moved out of the area along with many of the Canada Geese; though many birders continued to search, there were no further reports of success. Besides being a first PINK-FOOTED GOOSE sighting in Maryland, some careful checking of records by Phil Davis indicated that this was probably the all-time most southerly sighting of the species in North America. Quite a record!



*Maryland's first Virginia's Warbler showed up at Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot County on February 15 and stayed until at least March 18. Photo courtesy of Al Smith.*

- The winter of 2012 did not bring the usual numbers of siskins, finches, or crossbills, so the several COMMON REDPOLLS that did show up provided highly treasured sightings for the few Maryland birders who managed to see them. The first report came from Assateague Island, Worcester County, where a single bird was heard, seen, and then photographed on Jan 28 by Rob Ostrowski of Crofton, Anne Arundel County. On Feb 2 and Feb 7 there were one-time sightings of single COMMON REDPOLLS at feeders of two private residences about a mile apart in Prince George's County. On Feb 5, Andy Wilson of Frederick County reported two COMMON REDPOLLS. The first was seen several times as it moved around on the Lilypons property during the light snow storm that was under way that day. The second bird was seen later in the day at the Claggett Center in nearby Buckeystown. Another COMMON REDPOLL was seen on Feb 28 by Sean McCandless of Cecil County. This bird was in the area of Stemmers Run, Baltimore County, near the boat ramp, and to find it Sean had to walk a small distance to a storm water pond where the bird was feeding in a sweet gum tree in the company of several AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES.
- SAW-WHET OWLS are known to often winter in our region, but most birders do not manage to find them. This year with the MOS State Convention being held in Ocean City in February, that situation changed. Joe Hanfman's Friday afternoon field trip headed to the Assateague Island road known as Shell Road, an area



that often hosts SAW-WHETS. But before Joe could finish explaining where and how to look for Saw-whets, Mike Welch of Frederick County spotted one on a scraggly pine tree beside the road. For the rest of the weekend, this beautiful and cooperative little SAW-WHET OWL, looking very much like the clusters of pine cones nearby, provided delightful views and photos for a continuous parade of very pleased birders. The bird was high enough in the tree to feel safe, and it had chosen a roosting spot close to the walking path, so perhaps it was finding good entertainment from the birders that were giving it all of that attention.

- Wintering waterfowl provide the normal highlights at Blackwater NWR but this year the numbers of ducks and geese were significantly lower than usual. Not so for the WHITE PELICAN FLOCK that has been using Blackwater in recent years. This year visitors were treated to record high numbers of these birds; the greatest number was 81, reported by Harry Armistead of Talbot County on March 22. One WHITE PELICAN had also been seen back on Feb 5 at Riley Roberts Road, Worcester County. The reporting birder was Jared Satchell of Oxford, Talbot County, and at the same time and location he also observed GREAT EGRET, SNOWY EGRET, and TRI-COLORED HERON.
- SANDHILL CRANES migrating through our region often provide brief sightings, but this year two of them showed up in Howard County and stayed around long enough to be seen and photographed by a goodly number of birders. The birds were first reported by George Berkheimer of Howard County, who found them in a field near the intersection of Gorman and Murray



*Nick Lund spotted this Pink-footed Goose within a flock of Canada Geese in Howard County on February 20, just north of Patuxent River SP. Photo by Bill Hubick.*

Hill Roads on Feb 28. George passed the word to Bob and Jo Solem, who promptly confirmed the sighting and reported it to Maryland birders. The CRANES could not be found on Feb 29 but they were located again on March 5 in the same general area. Careful and patient searching produced successful sightings from then through March 9.

- The great birding weather of this period made it possible for lots of birders to be out and chasing whatever was about. One highly attractive target for chasers was a LE CONTE'S SPARROW at the Irvine Nature Center in Baltimore County. Keith Costley of Baltimore County found and reported the bird, a first Baltimore County record, on March 11, and it was successfully viewed by many through at least March 18. Throughout the visit the Irvine Nature Center provided excellent cooperation, extending visiting hours and allowing birders to enter the property for early morning searching.

## LIST OF LISTERS

Check out Russ Ruffing's magnum opus, the 68-page 2011 State and Locality List Report—or, more colloquially, "The Maryland Birders' List of Listers; A Compilation of Birding Adventures." Even non-listers will enjoy reading the introductory essay, "What's with Listing?" and probably no one will be surprised to learn that, in the "Bird of the Year" competition, Green Violetear won in a landslide.

The report is available at two sites. On the MOS web site, [mdbirds.org](http://mdbirds.org), go to MDbird lists, then locality lists, and 2011. Alternatively, the document is posted on Bill Hubick's web site, [billhubick.com](http://billhubick.com), under assorted documents.

## MEET OUR NEXT PRESIDENT: MAUREEN F. HARVEY

Many birders recall a particular bird or incident that marked the start of their birding. The spark was lit for me back in 1956 during second grade in Memphis, TN, with a *Weekly Reader* article on Smokey Bear and Teddy Roosevelt and a new word for me—conservation. The very next summer vacation, my family visited Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I wasn't so much hooked on birds as I was on nature in general and being in the great outdoors.

During my years growing up, my family lived in seven states. Wherever we went, my dad knew many of the birds and would point them out—kestrel, mockingbird, Blue Jay, “English” Sparrow, cardinal, and the late night whinny of Screech Owl. When he and mom moved to Rockville in 1968 during my freshman year in college, he was excited to identify a bird new to him—Purple Grackle.

After graduating from high school in Cincinnati in 1967, I enrolled at Miami U of Ohio—but I dropped out in June 1969 when I met my now late first spouse, Tony Ritz, during a summer “job” as a volunteer subject at NIH in Bethesda. Tony and I first lived in Alexandria, VA, where our daughter Kristin was born, and in 1971 we moved to Columbia, MD. The following years were spent working, raising Kris, being a ballet mom, and playing soccer in the women's league.

I also attended UMUC night school and earned a BS in Accounting (summa cum laude). Meanwhile, in



*Maureen, front and center, surrounded by fellow Carroll County birders (from left) Don Jewel, Dave Harvey, Bill Ellis, Dave Hudgins, and Bob Ringler.*

January 1981, I shifted careers—from banking to submarine communication systems' evaluation at Johns Hopkins U Applied Physics Lab. In 1984, my future second spouse and submarine veteran, Dave Harvey, joined my work group at APL. In August 2011 I retired after more than 30 years at APL. By the way, APL has many, many birders on the campus, many of whom I consider good friends.

My introduction to MOS began in about 1976 when a neighbor invited me to attend one of Eileen Clegg's (Howard Co Bird Club) slide shows on the birds of Maryland at Jeffer's Hill Neighborhood Center in Columbia. That was when I finally found out the name of those big birds that troll the sky above the highways all over our state (Turkey Vultures)! In the 1980s, Howard Co Parks & Rec sponsored inexpensive outings via school bus, and we took several of their guided trips to Blackwater NWR, when a sighting of one Bald Eagle was a rare thrill.

In 1981, Tony, Kris, and I moved to a single family home with woods

behind us. There I was intrigued by unfamiliar bird songs, particularly the ethereal flute-like tones of a bird I never could find. Some years later, a speckled brown bird dropped briefly to the ground and I knew this was it. I asked my coworker and avid birder, Dave Harvey, for help with the ID: Wood Thrush. Dave invited me and Tony to attend bird club meetings, crash through briars on one of Jay Sheppard's owl searches, and help with the 1987 Triadelphia Christmas

Bird Count. During the last months of Tony's life in spring of 1989, my friend and co-worker Shiras Guion (past HCBC and MOS Treasurer) also encouraged me to get out and go birding; I found respite in the Sunday morning walks at Centennial Park. After Tony's passing, Dave phoned to ask what he could do, and I said, “Take me birding!” Well, we were married at the end of that summer.

Dave and I reside near Sykesville and belong to both the Howard and Carroll Co Bird Clubs. We have enjoyed birding trips together all over the US and Canada, a little of Mexico, several countries in Central and South America, England, Spain, Mallorca, Turkey, Israel, South Africa, and Australia. Sabah (northernmost state of Malaysia on Borneo) and the Malaysian Peninsula are on our agenda for June 2012. I have served CCBC as VP and President, and MOS as Conservation Chair for 8 years. It has been a privilege and learning experience to serve as MOS VP these past 2 years, and I look forward to assuming the role of President later this summer.



## MEET OUR NEXT VP: TOM STRIKWERDA

**A**stronomy was my first love when I was in high school, but at some point I noticed that my two younger brothers were making Saturday birding excursions with our aunt. I was curious, and soon I was joining their weekend field trips.

During college, planets, stars, and galaxies took more and more of my time as I considered a career in astronomy, but birding still provided weekend adventures. While most college students took advantage of Saturday mornings without classes and slept in, I woke early and headed to the parks and forests along Lake Michigan with one of my brothers. We didn't bird systematically or keep lists, but simply enjoyed the pleasure of being outdoors and searching for species we hadn't seen before.

Graduate school years at UVa brought a hiatus from birding because of classes and astronomy dissertation

research, not to mention the hours and days my wife Donna and I spent exploring the many attractions of the east coast, hiking the Blue Ridge Mountains, and biking the countryside around Charlottesville. I'm sure I noticed birds, and I always had binoculars close at hand, but my preoccupations were elsewhere.

Postgraduate research at Virginia Tech offered more time for relaxation. Sometime during that period, while camping in the mountains near Blacksburg, I remember trying to locate a bird whose call I thought was magical. I don't recall seeing the bird. It was probably a Veery or waterthrush, as best I can remember the song. I was intrigued, on the way to being hooked.

Soon thereafter I moved to Maryland for a position at JHU's Applied Physics Laboratory. Fortunately, not long after arriving I saw an ad for a

Howard County Bird Club meeting just a few blocks from our apartment. That evening was the beginning of my long association with MOS and my growing interest in birding. Though my birding remains casual, I've enjoyed the club for many reasons, most particularly the annual conferences and the winter, spring, and fall counts. I've also found it rewarding to serve the club in a number of ways over the years, first as a chapter director and president, then by coordinating the mailing of *Maryland Birdlife*, and most recently as chair of the MOS Scholarship committee.

Today one of my strongest interests is travel, both nationally and internationally. Though I'm still not much of a lister, a pair of binoculars and a bird book are always in the travel bag, ready for the next magical bird call.

## CHAN'S ALBATROSS HATCHES YET ANOTHER CHICK

Wisdom, the amazing Laysan Albatross that's been nesting each of the past 56 years in the same place on Midway Atoll NWR, hatched another chick in early February, 2012. When Maryland's renowned Chan Robbins banded Wisdom at that same location in 1956, she was a nesting adult estimated to be at least five years old—making her at least 61 years old and the oldest Laysan albatross on record. Scientists believe that Wisdom has hatched over 35 eggs in her lifetime, including every year since 2008

The new chick, immediately dubbed Wonder, is doing well. Wisdom and her mate have been taking turns foraging and bringing food to the chick; one parent stays with the young bird at all times.

Wonder joins last year's chick, which wears a red band #N333. When the 2011 tsunami overran Midway at midnight on March 11, Wisdom's nest was on high enough ground to be safe. But Wisdom couldn't be found for days. Finally, on the tenth day, she returned to feed her chick. (<http://earthsky.org/biodiversity/the-oldest-known-wild-bird-in-the-us-became-a-mother-again-and-survived-the-march-2011-tsunami>)

*Thanks to Shirley Geddes, long-time member of the Baltimore Bird Club, for bringing this item to our attention.*

## MAY COUNT 2012 • SATURDAY, MAY 12

The May Count this year will be held on Saturday, May 12. This will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that Maryland birders have conducted this survey of the bird populations in the state in the first half of May. By the second week in May, many of the species that nest in Maryland have returned to their breeding grounds and they are temporarily joined by an array of warblers, vireos, and other migrating species whose numbers peak in the state around this time.

Because species diversity is at its highest point, plumages are the brightest, and bird songs fill the air, there is no better time to bird in Maryland than the first half of May. If you are willing to slap on some

sun screen and insect repellent, you will be rewarded with a great day of birding. More volunteers mean better coverage. For those who are interested in participating for the first time, each County has an assigned compiler who can provide you with maps of territories that need coverage and pair you up with experienced birders who will show you the ropes. You will learn new spots to bird that you didn't know existed.

Check the Calendar (page 18) for May 12, where Andy Martin has listed all the May Counts and compilers (and May 6 and 13 for bonus counts). A list of County Compilers can be also accessed at the MOS web site at [www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc/2012\\_May\\_Counts.pdf](http://www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc/2012_May_Counts.pdf).

Due to their rural nature and smaller populations, counties on the Eastern Shore and in Western Maryland need additional assistance with May Count. Volunteers from the more populous parts of the state can explore new territories in these rural areas and will likely see species that they do not see in their home county. Contact the County Coordinator for an area that interests you.

Please join us in the field on May 12 for a great day of birding!

— Mike Welch  
May Count Coordinator  
[manddwelch@comcast.net](mailto:manddwelch@comcast.net)



### The Conservation Connection by Kurt Schwarz

## MOS STANDS UP FOR THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

In February, the MOS Conservation Committee filed comment with the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding a proposed change in definitions under the Endangered Species Act. The proposed change could have resulted in large portions of an endangered species' range going unprotected under the act. Our comments urged the Service to consider both the current and historic ranges of a species and adopt measures to protect or re-establish multiple populations throughout the known range of a species, as a sort of "insurance policy" against extinction.

The Conservation Committee drafts quite a few letters per year on conservation issues, ranging for land management, to wind power, and even pesticides. We file comment from County up to Federal level, and on rare occasions, even internationally. As time permits, we hopefully will provide accounts for the Yellowthroat. Meanwhile, feel free to contact the Conservation Chair for current actions.



## UPDATE ON GOSHAWK REWARD FUND

In response to the 2011 shooting death of Maryland's only known breeding female Northern Goshawk, which also claimed the lives of her three chicks, MOS members donated over \$2,100 to establish a reward fund for anyone who could provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of the culprit. The initial arrangement was that the reward would be held in MOS's banking accounts for up to three years.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Police (NRP) confirmed that someone turned in a suspect who was later questioned about the incident. However, the suspect did not confess. Because it was a matter of one person's word against another's, with no physical evidence, the suspect was released.

The case is currently suspended but it is not closed. NRP hopes that physical evidence will be uncovered in the area of the kill during this spring's Wild Turkey season. If no physical evidence is found and the case is declared closed, then MOS will decide whether to release the reward fund ahead of the three-year schedule. If approved, donors will have the option to either (1) receive a refund or (2) stipulate that their donation be used to purchase equipment for goshawk research in Western Maryland.

Those with questions should contact the MOS Treasurer, Dave Webb, at [porzana@comcast.net](mailto:porzana@comcast.net).

### **“Go Solar” and Earn \$750 for MOS (and put another \$750 in your pocket)**

By Chris Toscano, Alternative Energy Committee Chairperson

At this year's MOS Annual Conference, attendees received a flyer in their registration packet introducing them to Sungevity, a company that leases residential solar panel systems. This innovative approach allows a lessee to install a solar system for a fraction of the cost of outright purchase, decreasing dependence on fossil fuels and reducing monthly energy bills.

To expand the use of residential solar—a form of alternative energy endorsed in the MOS Policy Statement on Alternative Energy, due to its low impact on bird health and bird habitat—Sungevity has developed an incentive program in which it partners with non-profit organizations, including MOS. For each new lease that is initiated by using the MOS referral web link (see below), Sungevity will give MOS \$750. It will also give each lessee \$750.

Sungevity maintains that a typical customer will save about 15% on electricity in their first year,

with savings increasing each year as grid electricity rates rise. A lessee can expect the reduction in his/her monthly energy bill to usually be greater than the Solar Lease payment. The company guarantees the performance of the system, provides proactive monitoring and maintenance, and insures the system against accidental damage.

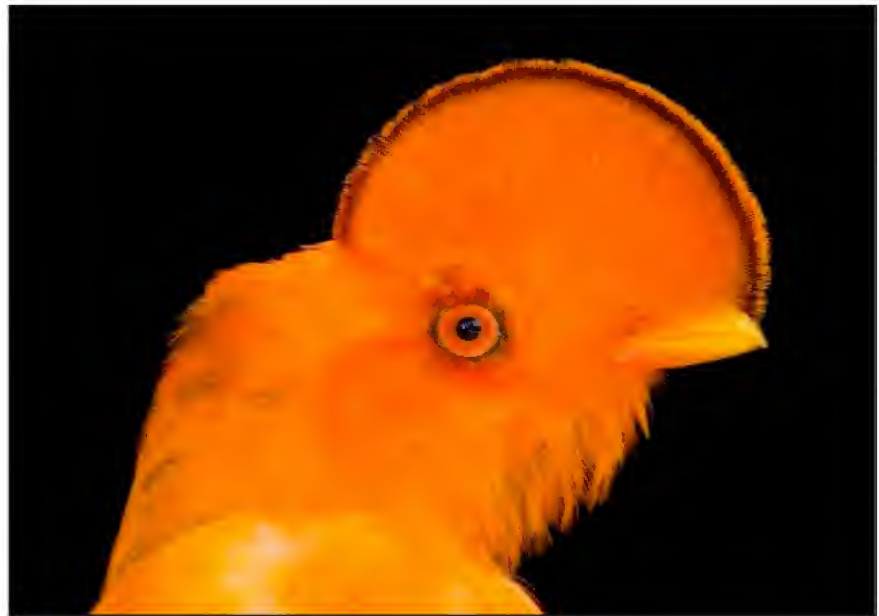
The Sungevity offer is a win-win for all involved. We get more solar power in Maryland, you get \$750 to put in your pocket (or your bank account), and MOS gets \$750. To take advantage of this offer, just go to **[www.sungevity.org/maryland-ornithological-society](http://www.sungevity.org/maryland-ornithological-society)** and request a Solar iQuote. As of March 20, MOS has already received its first \$750 thanks to an MOS member who signed up for a solar lease through Sungevity. So what are you waiting for? You know you have always wanted solar panels. Now you can have them for less than you ever thought and you can help MOS in the process. Go Solar!

## BIRDING GUYANA • JANUARY, 2012

The ad at the airport was entirely true: “Guyana Is a Birder’s Paradise.” Six intrepid birders led by Frank Gill (author of *Ornithology* and director and retired chief scientist of the National Audubon Society) and Sally Conyne (retired director of citizen science at NAS) roamed this remarkable land in the company of two local guides (worth their ornithological weight in gold!) to cover its diverse natural habitats—along its coast and rivers and in its hinterland savanna and Amazonian rainforest.

We made an easy start at Georgetown’s Botanical Gardens, with its extensive collection of Caribbean tropical flora amid extensive ponds with *Victoria amazonica* lilies and the occasional West Indian manatee. Red-and-green and Red-shouldered Macaws and all five species of Amazonian parrots clattered in the branches of trees along the road; three species of egrets, Wattled Jacanas, night-herons, and Snail and Grey-headed Kites were constantly in view; a Yellow-headed Caracara swept the area in lazy fashion before settling on the Kissing Bridge famous for you-know-what. After scouring many a tree, we spotted the astonishingly colorful Blood-colored Woodpecker, endemic to the Guiana Shield. Along with Black-crested Antshrike and Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, this brought our two-hour total to 80 species.

Less than an hour from Georgetown the Mahaica River winds through mangrove forest and savanna and, in small boats, we plied its tannin-rich waters. Soon we encountered Guyana’s national bird, the Hoatzin, a “pre-historic” relic with blood-



As the birders watched, this brilliant male Guianan Cock-of-the-rock quartered its lek.  
Photo courtesy of Colin Rees, et al.

red eyes ringed in blue skin and a punkish crest of long feathers; these gawky and noisy birds clamber in the tops of the mangrove trees for most of the day. Hosts of birds lined the waterway, the most impressive being Rufous Crab-Hawk, Pied Water Tyrant, Guianan Gnatcatcher, and various tanagers and orioles. Later, from the extensive seawall overlooking mudflats and in the setting sun, we enjoyed Magnificent Frigatebirds and Scarlet Ibis as well as numerous waders.

Next day we flew to Annai in the up-country Rupununi region and drove to the eco-lodge in Surama Village, an Amerindian settlement in open savanna lands surrounded by the forest-covered Pakaraima Mountains. Surama shares a common border with the Iwokrama International Centre for Conservation and Development along the Burro River; the Burro affords views of giant river otters, black spider and red howler

monkeys, tree boas and a myriad of herons, kingfishers, and other birds. A day trek into the forest led us to the lek of a Guianan Cock-of-the-rock (*Rupicola rupicola*) where, squatting between massive boulders, we watched a male with brilliant orange coloring and impressive Mohawk quarter the area. Reward enough, perhaps, but an hour later we were staring at an 18-month-old Harpy Eagle (“flying wolf” to locals) as it dismembered its prey high up on a massive nest. But there was yet more, with excursions on the Essequibo River (day and night), Atta Canopy Walkway, and Turtle Mountain. I mention only a few highlights: black caiman, anaconda, kinkajou, squirrel monkey, Red-and-black Grosbeak, Golden-sided Euphonia, toucans, Waved Woodpecker, White-winged Potoo, Green Aracari, cotingas, Ladder-tailed Nightjar, White Bellbird, Marail Guan, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, jacamars, and antbirds.



In the North Rupununi (staying at Rock View Lodge), we made captivating journeys crossing the savanna and associated wetlands. At Mora Bridge the swirls of whistling-ducks (White-faced and Black-bellied) and jabbing Jabiru and Wood and Maguari Storks entertained us for many an hour, and we were graced from time to time by passing Pygmy Kingfishers, Savanna Hawks, and Long-winged Harriers. As we were returning to base, a Double-striped Thick-knee crossed our path and in the distance we caught sight of a giant anteater with a youngster on its back and a Pinnated Bittern stock still in tall grass.

At Karanambu Lodge on the Rupununi River we met the famous Diane Turk to learn about her work conserving the giant river otter while sampling rum punch and home-made cookies. The lodge buzzed with many brilliant Rose-breasted Chats but resting ourselves from rum and comfort (too much?) we sped off to peruse nearby lakes favoring Green, Rufous, and Amazon Kingfishers.

Our next stop was Karassabei Village perched between the northern Rupununi savanna and Pakaraima Mountains along the Brazilian border. Here we had a opportunity to see the rare and endangered Sun Parakeet feeding upon wild nuts! In the early 1990's, this species was on the brink of extinction with only seven individuals remaining due to extreme pressures from the pet trade harvesting. Fortunately, local villagers took aggressive action to rehabilitate the population and current numbers are estimated at 300.

We then flew to the spectacular Kaieteur Falls, the world's highest free-falling waterfall. In late

afternoon, Orange-breasted Falcons chased flocks of White-collared Swifts until they all sought safety of the rock shelves behind the waterfall. South America's largest butterfly the morpho Hecuba with eight-inch wingspans of iridescent blue flew about the gorge and some of us pared back giant tank bromeliads to find the tiny and world's most poisonous golden dart frogs, which apparently live their entire lives in these leaves. Plant species alone in the Falls area are estimated to exceed 1,100 species, with 22 being endemic to the Kaieteur National Park.

In 10 days we saw some 340 of the 814 species known to Guyana. Improving eco-lodges, ranches, and community projects provide comfortable though sometimes basic accommodation, and we enjoyed excellent meals prepared from local produce. Friendly and helpful staff fit all birding styles, and communications within Guyana and with the outside world are easy and reliable. Guides (often Amerindian) are expert and enable you to view and appreciate the forest and other landscapes through their very sharp eyes. As roads are few and unsealed away from the coast, rivers and small aircraft are the only means to get to the interior. While this makes travel more

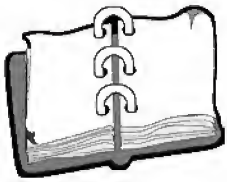
difficult, it also protects the forests and savannas from over-visitation; further, the limited number of lodges

and small number of rooms (mostly just 4 to 10) reinforce this protection. In addition to peace and solitude, this also means the animals are not pushed deep into the forest, but remain close to roads, tracks, and humans generally. Wildlife tourism is becoming increasingly professional, and air services between North America and Guyana are regular and reliable. In short, this small English-speaking country is fast becoming a rival to Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

—Colin Rees, President  
Anne Arundel Bird Club



*The massive Harpy Eagle is known to locals as a "flying wolf."*  
Photo courtesy of Colin Rees, et al.



## MOS Calendar

### May-June 2012

#### Tuesday, May 1

**Baltimore.** Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year. For new meeting place, contact leader, Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

**MEETING. Baltimore.** Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. "Twenty Years of Changing Birdlife: Results of the 2002-2006 MD-DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project, with *Walter Ellison*, project director. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete\_webb@juno.com.

#### Wednesday, May 2

**Baltimore.** First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

**Baltimore.** Evening Walk at Fort McHenry. First in a series of evening bird walks at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 6 PM and park outside the gate. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

**MEETING. Carroll.** "Nature Photography" by *Ken Koons* of the *Carroll County Times*. 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117, for more info.

**POTLUCK DINNER AND MEETING. Cecil.** Please bring a dish to share. Speaker: None. At our last meeting of the season, we'll wrap up club business and maybe even hold elections. Meetings will resume in Sept. Location: Maryanne Dolan's house. Please e-mail Maryanne (maryanne.dolan@gmail) for directions. Time: 7 to 9 PM.

#### Thursday, May 3

**MEETING. Frederick.** *Gail Mackiernan* will talk about her cruise-ship birding, "East Pacific Odyssey... or, If It's Tuesday It Must Be Ecuador." 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

**Patuxent.** Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

#### Friday, May 4

**MEETING. Anne Arundel.** 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center. "Horseshoe Crabs and Shorebirds: The Inextricable Connection and Conservation Concerns" by *Gerald Winegrad* and *Stacy Epperson*.

**Frederick.** First Friday trip. Leader and destination TBA. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. For info contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

**MEETING. Harford.** Pizza party starting at 6:30 PM; reservations required. After pizza, students of Prospect Mill ES will report on their school's bird club activities. Harford Glen Environmental Edu Ctr, 502 West Wheel Rd in Bel Air. For more info, contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.

#### Saturday, May 5

**MAY COUNT. Dorchester.** 89<sup>th</sup> May Count. First of two Dorchester counts. Compiler: Harry Amistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

**Anne Arundel.** Southern Maryland. North Beach, Cypress Swamp, Flag Ponds, and Calvert Cliffs SP. Facilities at some stops. Bring lunch. Leader: Nick Nicholson, 410-353-3329 or nickinchrist@netzero.net. Meet 7:30 AM at Parole P&R located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds.

**Baltimore.** Milford Mill Park. One-mile level walk on paved path for migrant warblers, thrushes, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other songbirds. Meet 7:30 AM at small lot near park entrance off Milford Mill Rd. If the lot is full, park along the side street across Milford Mill Rd from the park entrance. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h) or 443-904-6314 (m), or pete\_webb@juno.com.

**Baltimore.** Youth Birding at Cromwell Valley Park. Ages 8-15 with parent. On the best warbler-birding day of the year, learn about how to bird with other birders ages 8 to 15. Learn how to use field guides and iPod apps to locate birds. Meet 8:30 AM. Please register for this program. Leaders: Rose Anderson, 443-802-8012, rose.k.anderson@gmail.com, and Marty Brazeau, 410-583-0275, tropicbirder@verizon.net.

**Cecil.** Bird Banding at North Bay Camp. North Bay educator Melanie Reichley, assisted by CBC member Lisa Wilson, demonstrate the delicate art of bird banding. Be prepared for muddy conditions as we walk through the hilly woodland. Bug spray and sunscreen are recommended. Meet at North Bay at 8:30 AM for this half-day trip. Contact Lisa at lisawilson@zoominternet.net for directions.

**Frederick.** Little Bennett RP. Half day. This park is a magnet for migrating warblers and other woodland species. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894.



**H Harford.** Fourth Annual Epic Birding Contest. We may not have Jack Black, Owen Wilson, and Steve Martin from "The Big Year," but we will have a spirited competition among teams to compile the highest tally of different species for this one morning. Don't miss out on this fun time at Susquehanna SP. Birders of all skill levels welcome. Meet at the Rock Run Mill at 6:30 AM for team selections and rules review. Counting will begin at 6:45 AM and end at 11:30 AM. Rally celebration will occur at approximately 12 noon at the Tidewater Grille in Havre de Grace. Family members and others are welcome to join the contestants for the celebration. Contact Tom Gibson, [gibsonlld@aol.com](mailto:gibsonlld@aol.com). Rain date: May 6.

**H Howard and Montgomery.** Pigtail at Triadelphia Reservoir. 2-3 hour trip. Joint trip in conjunction with WSSC. Meet 8 AM at the Green Bridge Rd parking lot off Triadelphia Mill Rd (note this is the Howard side). The cove is bordered on three sides by deciduous and coniferous woods. Extensive mudflats may exist with the possibility of shorebirds. For more info contact the leader, Michael O'Sullivan, [fr84wrdr@yahoo.com](mailto:fr84wrdr@yahoo.com). Facilities available (rustic).

**H Kent.** Beginner's Bird Walk at Brampton Inn. Half day. By special arrangement with the owners of this local B&B, we'll take a leisurely walk among wood margins, fields, and small ponds looking for spring migrants: swallows, warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Two to three hours. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or [rossgull@baybroadband.net](mailto:rossgull@baybroadband.net).

**H Patuxent.** Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at [kiwisuits@msn.com](mailto:kiwisuits@msn.com).

**H Washington.** Warm up for the May Count with a morning of birding on the Antietam Battlefield. Call 301-797-8454 for details.

### Sunday, May 6

**H Anne Arundel.** Fairhill NRA and Tri-State Bird Rescue. Come to an area rich in bird diversity during spring migration, led by Sean McCandless. Sean is an expert in bird identification and Fairhill is his favorite haunt this time of year. After a thorough walk, we will eat our bagged lunch, and then those interested can drive 20 minutes further to Tri-State Bird Rescue in Newark, DE. Volunteer coordinator Julie Bartley will give us a tour of the small facility that does so much for injured and orphaned birds. Leader: Stacy Epperson, 410-987-7533 or [tryswim@comcast.net](mailto:tryswim@comcast.net). Meet 6:30 AM at Severna Park P&R located on the corner of Jones Station Rd and Ritchie Hwy.

**H Anne Arundel.** Patuxent River Park, Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary. Half-day trip for migrants in a great place by the river. Meet 7 AM at Parole P&R located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds. Leader: Barbara Ricciardi, [barbararicciardi@bipc.com](mailto:barbararicciardi@bipc.com).

**H Baltimore.** Leakin Park. Please join us for a bird walk to Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park. This (approximately) 1,200 acre wilderness park in west Balt City contains mature and secondary forest as well as riparian habitats and some limited field habitat. Meet 8 AM at the parking lot at the corner of Windsor Mill Rd and Eagle Dr (1900 Eagle Dr). Leaders: Elise and Paul Kreiss, 410-367-8194 or [ekreiss@toadmail.com](mailto:ekreiss@toadmail.com) or [pkreiss@toadmail.com](mailto:pkreiss@toadmail.com).

**H Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or [ilenel@juno.com](mailto:ilenel@juno.com).

**H Cecil.** DelMarVa Ornithological Society Annual Bird-a-Thon. Our good friends in the DelMarVa Ornithological Society sponsor an annual Bird-A-Thon to create awareness of conservation issues and to raise funds to support habitat preservation. We support this effort with a field trip to Ft. DuPont SP in New Castle Co, DE, during the first half of May. Meet 6 AM near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213. Easy walking on level ground. Sunscreen and bug spray are recommended. Leader: Pat Valdata, [pvaldata@zoominternet.net](mailto:pvaldata@zoominternet.net).

**FRED ARCHIBALD MAY COUNT.** **Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Coordinator: Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or [Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org](mailto:Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org).

**H Montgomery and Talbot.** Little Bennett RP. Joint club trip near peak of migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Space is limited, so please make reservations in advance by contacting the leaders, Gemma Radko, 310-514-2894, or Terry Allen, 410-829-5840. Breakfast hostess: The gracious and always smiling Helen Patton. Depart Easton Acme Parking Lot 6:30 AM.

### Tuesday, May 8

**H Baltimore.** Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year. For new meeting place, contact leader: Ron Davis, 410-821-1297 or [2athigh1@verizon.net](mailto:2athigh1@verizon.net).

**MEETING. Kent.** Program and speaker TBA. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

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**Montgomery.** Rock Creek Park, DC. Migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Rd. Call the leader for more info and for specific directions. Limit: 6. Reservations required. Leader: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

MEETING. **Patuxent.** Program TBA. The formal program begins at 7:30 PM, but doors open at 7 PM for informal conversation, refreshments, and exchange of birding news. Location: College Park Airport Annex. For more info, contact Fred Shaffer at glaucousgull@verizon.net.

### Wednesday, May 9

**Baltimore.** Evening Walk at Fort McHenry. Second in a series of evening bird walks at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 6 PM and park outside the gate. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Birds of Southern Africa." *Mark Abdy* leads safaris to southern Africa each year and will present a slide program on some of the beautiful birds he has photographed. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevept@takomavillage.org.

### Wednesday-Sunday, May 9-13

**YMOs.** World Series of Birding, Cape May, NJ. For YMOs WSB team members only. Trip departs at 5 AM Wednesday morning for 3 days of scouting. We'll participate in the Big Day on Sat, trying to find as many species as we can in 1 day. We'll return Sun around 4 PM after the Awards Brunch. Birdathon fundraising will hopefully pay for the motel, the Awards Brunch, a T-Shirt, and most of the food costs. For more info, go to [www.ymos.org/](http://www.ymos.org/) or contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com.

### Thursday, May 10

MEETING. **Howard.** "Birding Ecuador: Andes to the Rainforest," by *Kevin Heffernan* and *Karen Darcy*. About

the size of Nevada, Ecuador has over 1,500 species of birds—fifth most in the world. Kevin and Karen saw more than 500 of these beautiful birds on this March 2011 tour to both sides of the Andes and the Amazon. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

### Friday, May 11

**Montgomery.** Birding by Ear along the C&O. The emphasis is on listening, so tune up your ears for this half-day canal walk. Migrant and nesting landbirds. Meet 7 AM at the end of Pennyfield Lock Rd. Reservations required. For more info and reservations, call the leaders: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226, and Ann Lucy, 301-229-8810.

### Saturday, May 12

**MAY COUNT. Allegany.** To participate, contact J.B. Churchill, jchurchi@atlanticbb.net, 301-689-8344 or 301-697-1223 (cell) to be assigned an area to count.

**MAY COUNT. Anne Arundel.** Contact Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336 or dottymum@comcast.net, to let her know where you will be counting.

**MAY COUNT. Baltimore.** All-day count of birds in Balt City and Co. For area assignments, call compiler Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

**MAY COUNT. Calvert County.** Compiler: Sue Hamilton, 410-586-1494 or seal10n2002@yahoo.com.

**MAY COUNT. Caroline.** Compiler: Debby Bennett. Contact her at dabennett1996@gmail.com for more info.

**MAY COUNT. Carroll.** Individual parties of counters will set their own schedules in their pre-arranged areas. Parties will count resident and spring migrant bird species throughout Carroll County. The Tally Rally will be hosted by Amy Hoffman at her home. Contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 to

coordinate count locations. RSVP to Amy Hoffman, 410-549-3598, if you will be attending Tally. Please bring a cash donation or a food item.

**MAY COUNT. Cecil.** No count in 2012.

**MAY COUNT. Charles.** Compiler: George Jett, 301-843-3524 or gmjett@comcast.net.

**MAY COUNT. Dorchester.** 90<sup>th</sup> May Count. 2<sup>nd</sup> of two Dorchester counts. Compiler: Harry Amistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

**MAY COUNT. Frederick.** Compiler: Mike Welch, 301-685-3561 or manddwelch@comcast.net.

**MAY COUNT. Garrett.** To participate contact Fran Pope, fpope@gcnetmail.net or 301-334-4908.

**MAY COUNT. Harford.** Help Harford contribute to this important data collection day and monitor migration throughout our locale. Contact the coordinator, Rick Cheicante, rickcheicante@cs.com, for assignment.

**MAY COUNT. Howard.** Compiler: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731 (H) or KJHeff@aol.com.

**MAY COUNT. Kent.** Compilers: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

**MAY COUNT. Montgomery.** Compiler: Diane Ford, dmford455@yahoo.com.

**MAY COUNT. Prince George's.** All day. For more info, contact the compiler: Fred Fallon, 410-286-8152 or fwfallon@earthlink.net.

**MAY COUNT. Queen Anne's.** Compiler: Glenn Therres, therres@atlanticbb.net.

**MAY COUNT. St. Mary's.** Compiler: Patty Craig, 407-451-0500 or walelu67@yahoo.com.

**H** Indicates Field Trip



☼ **MAY COUNT. Somerset.** Compiler: Paul G. Bystrak, [shrike@comcast.net](mailto:shrike@comcast.net).

☼ **MAY COUNT. Talbot.** To participate call Coordinator Les Coble, 410-820-6165.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Washington.** Contact county coordinator Mark Abdy, 301-432-7696, to participate.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Wicomico.** Compiler: Ellen Lawler, 410-546-9056.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Worcester.** Compiler, Mark Hoffman, [wcbirding@comcast.net](mailto:wcbirding@comcast.net).

🏠 **Cecil.** Elk Neck SF. Traverse the quiet wooded lanes of one of Cecil's prime birding gems. At this time of year, the forest is starting to ring with the songs of newly arrived summer residents: Veery, Wood Thrush, Hooded Warbler, Worm-eating and Black-and-white Warblers, Great Crested Flycatcher, and other goodies. Meet 7 AM at the State Forest office parking lot off Irishtown Rd. Wear sturdy footwear for walking trails that may be muddy. Sunscreen and bug spray are recommended. Leader: Parke John, [parke@del.net](mailto:parke@del.net).

WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING. New Jersey Audubon will proudly host the 29th annual World Series of Birding—North America's premier conservation event. This competition has changed the birding landscape and raised over \$8,000,000 for bird conservation. Every species found, every dollar raised preserves and protects critical bird habitat.

### Sunday, May 13

☼ **AUDREY CARROLL MAY COUNT. Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Coordinator: David Smith, 410-549-7082.

🏠 **Baltimore.** Owings Mills Mall Wetland. Willow Flycatcher, Green Heron, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole are just a few of the birds that breed in and around the Mall's wetland area. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or [oriolekec1@comcast.net](mailto:oriolekec1@comcast.net). Meet 7:30 AM near movie

theater parking lot (there's a pond downhill on the right).

🏠 **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the main Vollmer Center parking lot Sun mornings for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or [ilenel@juno.com](mailto:ilenel@juno.com).

🏠 **Baltimore.** Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Crk. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Leaders: Bob Rineer, 410-252-6408 or [rrineer1@jhmi.edu](mailto:rrineer1@jhmi.edu), and Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or [baypuffin@hotmail.com](mailto:baypuffin@hotmail.com). Meet 9 AM at Nature Center parking lot.

🏠 **Talbot.** Pocomoke Swamp. We will bird the Nassawango Creek Preserve in search of migrant and resident songbirds. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-829-5840. Depart Easton Acme Parking Lot at 6:30 AM. Bring lunch, drinks, snacks to share, and insecticide.

### Tuesday, May 15

🏠 **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year. For new meeting place contact leader. Leader: Joan Cwi, 410-467-5352 or [jafjsc@verizon.net](mailto:jafjsc@verizon.net).

### Wednesday, May 16

🏠 **Baltimore.** Evening Walk at Fort McHenry. Third in a series of evening bird walks at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 6 PM and park outside the gate. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or [oriolekec1@comcast.net](mailto:oriolekec1@comcast.net).

🏠 **Howard.** Henryton Road. Plan for moderate walking and possibly muddy trails. This section of Patapsco Valley SP is nesting area for Yellow-throated, Worm-eating, and Cerulean Warblers. Meet 8 AM at bottom of Henryton

Rd at the dead end. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329 or [LBRoller@verizon.net](mailto:LBRoller@verizon.net).

### Thursday, May 17

MEETING. **Caroline.** Program: "Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage's Monarch-Tagging Program" presented by *Andi Pupke*. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. For add'l info contact Debby Bennett at [dabennett1996@gmail.com](mailto:dabennett1996@gmail.com).

🏠 **Patuxent.** Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

### Friday-Sunday, May 18-20

🐦 **Baltimore.** Baltimore Orioles Youth Birding Club weekend at Carey Run Sanctuary, Frostburg. Join us for the weekend in the mountains of Western MD. We will stay in an old farmhouse at a 162-acre bird sanctuary. We will visit local state parks to bird for mountain nesting warblers. Trip is limited to 10. To register: contact Marty Brazeau at 410-583-0275, [tropicbirder@verizon.net](mailto:tropicbirder@verizon.net).

### Saturday, May 19

🏠 **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Erin Lineberry, 443-742-9895.

🏠 **Cecil.** Fair Hill NRMA. Fair Hill is one of Cecil Co's loveliest birding spots. A variety of habitats, including woods, fields, and wetlands, means that we will see a number of different species, especially spring migrants and breeding birds like Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Scarlet Tanager, Warbling Vireo, and many others. Be prepared for some muddy/wet areas, a few hills, and lots of fun. Sunscreen and bug spray are recommended. Meet at 7 AM for this half-day trip at

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the Foxcatcher Farm Covered Bridge parking lot near the Fair Hill Nature and Environmental Center on Tawes Dr. There is an honor system daily fee (\$3 MD residents; \$4 out-of-state visitors). Leaders: Parke John, parke@del.net and David Francis.

**H Harford.** Cromwell Valley Park. Back by popular demand, this avian excursion explores this excellent Baltimore Co preserve that, hopefully, will be teeming with late spring migrants. Led by veterans Dave Larkin and Phil Powers. Meet at the commuter lot on the west side of Rte 152 (Fallston Rd) just north of Rte 147 (Harford Rd.) at 7 AM.

**H BIG DAY. Howard.** All day listing extravaganza! Limit 12. E-mail or call the leader to sign up. Plan to spend the day hiking around the county in search of as many species as possible. All types of footwear needed. Bring food and drinks. Facilities in some spots. Leader: Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 410-461-3361.

**H LITTLE BIG DAY. Howard.** This trip is designed for beginner and intermediate birders and will not be as intense as the Big Day trip. Some of the same locations as the Big Day trip may be visited. E-mail or call the leader for reservations and details. Facilities in some spots. Leaders: Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com.

**H Patuxent.** Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. No reservations required. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

**Saturday-Sunday, May 19-20**

**H Frederick.** Shorebirds Weekend. We'll hit the famous shorebirding spots in DE looking for Red Knots and as many other species as we can find during this prime time of shorebird migration. Our second day will probably take us to the MD beaches for more shorebirds as well

as whips and chucks. Details TBA. Leader: Tom Humphrey, 301-696-8940.

**Sunday, May 20**

**H Anne Arundel.** DE Bay. Gerald Winegrad (410-280-8956 or gwwabc@comcast.net) will once again lead this fabulous trip to points on the Delaware Bay to see horseshoe crabs spawning and the multitudes of shorebirds that depend on horseshoe crab eggs to fuel their migration. Meet 7:30 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center located off Rte 50 on Whitehall Rd. Bring lunch.

**H Baltimore.** Halethorpe Ponds. This lightly used area of Patapsco Valley SP includes woods, freshwater ponds, second growth, and a powerline right-of-way. Wading birds, terns, flycatchers, vireos, swallows, warblers, and orioles are among the expected birds. Moderate walking; trails may be very poor and muddy. No facilities. Meet 7 AM at the Nursery Rd P&R. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

**H Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the main Vollmer Center parking lot Sun mornings for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

**H Kent.** DE Bay Shorebirds and Horseshoe Crabs. The annual May gathering of northbound shorebirds including large numbers of Red Knot and Ruddy Turnstones in bright breeding dress feeding on horseshoe crab eggs along the shores of Delaware Bay is a migration spectacle. We will visit the DE Bay shore from Prime Hook north to Mispillion Light; this area is also good for coastal marsh birds, gulls, and terns. Full day, bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

**H** Indicates Field Trip

**H Montgomery.** Rock Creek Park, DC. Migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Rd. Call the leader for more info and for specific directions. Limit: 6. Reservations required. Leader: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

**H Talbot.** Chesapeake Forest area (N Tara Rd) near Federalsburg. Possibly 12 or more species of warbler and 3 vireo species, Acadian Flycatcher, Bank and Cliff Swallows at the El Dorado bridge. Leader: Vince DeSanctis, 410-886-2009. Depart Easton Acme Parking lot at 7 AM.

**H Tri-County.** Worcester Co inland bays. Shorebirds, marsh birds, and other migrants. Meet 7 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Leader: Sam Dyke, 410-603-7615.

**Monday, May 21**

MEETING. **Tri-County.** Program TBA. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury. For more info contact Betty Pitney at 410-543-1853.

**Tuesday, May 22**

**H Baltimore.** Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year. For new meeting place, contact leader. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

**H Harford.** Mariner Park in Joppatowne. This beautiful park is full of birds and provides an easy, wheelchair-accessible trail for all to enjoy. This trip, as are most of our trips, is open to all, but a special invitation is extended to wheelchair and limited mobility birders. Join leader Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net, at 8 AM to look for eagles, migrants, and waterfowl. Meet at the Park Pavilion. Those in need of mobility assistance should contact the leader in advance.



**MEETING. Washington.** Members' Night. Bring short presentations, photos, stories, or anything of interest to share with your birding friends. 7 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Call 301-797-8454 for more info.

### Wednesday, May 23

**Baltimore.** Evening Walk at Fort McHenry. Continuing series of evening bird walks at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 6 PM and park outside the gate. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

**Montgomery.** Washington County for breeders and late migrants. 3/4 to full day. Explore some of Washington Co's under-birded treasures. Bring snacks, drinks, lunch, insect repellent, etc. Reservations required. Limit:10. Carpooling strongly recommended. For reservations and directions to meeting place, call the leader, Jim Green, at 301-742-0036 (cell).

### Saturday, May 26

**Baltimore.** Patterson Park. Look for late spring migrants and resident Wood Ducks, American Kestrel, and surprises in this urban oasis. Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963 or dcurson@audubon.org. Meet 8 AM at the White House (27 South Patterson Park Ave), just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S. Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St.

**Harford.** Conowingo Dam. A great place to see eagles and orioles as well as Prothonotary Warblers. Meet at the new observation platform at the north end of the parking lot at 8 AM. The leader is Les Eastman, 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

**Howard and Montgomery.** Hot Spots for Red Knots. Full day. Joint trip. We will start at 8:30 AM at the visitor center for Prime Hook NWR and work our way north along Delaware Bay. We will also visit the handsome and informative nature center at Mispillion Light, which offers great views of Red Knots and other shorebirds. We will go until dark

or exhaustion, whichever comes first. Bring binoculars, scopes, food, water, sunscreen, loads of insect repellent. Trip is limited to 12 persons/3 vehicles per chapter. Reservations required. Co-leaders: Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@verizon.net or 410-461-1643, and Cyndie Loeper, cyndieloeper@comcast.net or 240-535-8584.

### Sunday, May 27

**Cecil.** Courthouse Point Rd. Courthouse Point MHA is one of the most productive birding sites in Cecil, boasting a long list of regular and accidental species from both dry and wet habitats. Meet 7:30 AM near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213. Easy walking on mostly level ground. Sunscreen and bug spray are recommended. Leader: Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.

**Howard.** Patapsco Scrubland. Meet at 735 River Rd (up long drive take right-hand split and park by house). Starting in the scrubland, we'll look for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species. Depending on conditions, we may continue into the woods. Moderate to possibly difficult walking; steep trails with several stream crossings, so wear appropriate footwear. Facilities available. Leader: Felicia Lovelett, 410-489-7169 or c5nest@gmail.com.

**Patuxent.** Delaware Bay. Meet at Bowie P&R at 7 AM. All day trip to the Delaware Bay to experience the great concentrations of shorebirds feeding on horseshoe crab eggs. Leader TBD. For more info, contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744.

**Talbot.** Bombay Hook NWR, Delaware Shore. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742. Bring lunch and drink for picnic. Bring insecticide and scope if available. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM.

### Monday, May 28

**Harford.** Upper Deer Creek Valley. Explore the streams and ponds of NW Harford Co and visit the world-famous Bradenbaugh Flats.

Expect to see warblers, Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Willow Flycatcher. Meet at the northern end of Madonna Rd where it crosses Deer Crk at Hidden Valley at 7 AM. Leader is Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.

### Saturday, June 2

**MOS BOARD MEETING.** Hosted by Washington Bird Club at Greenbrier SP. For info, contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, at janetbill@prodigy.net.

**Frederick.** Manahan Road. Half day. Migration is a week or so behind up in the Catoctins, and we should see a nice mix of warblers and other migrants up in the Manahan Rd area. Leader: Lois Kauffman, 301-845-6690.

**Harford.** Bombay Hook NWR. The premier location on the East Coast for shorebird migration. Join leader Russ Kovach (russell.kovach@gmail.com ; 410-457- 4274) to search for the rare and the familiar. Meet at 7 AM at the 155/95 P&R. Bring a picnic lunch. A comfort/fast food breakfast stop will be made before arriving at the refuge.

**Patuxent.** Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

### Thursday, June 7

**ANNUAL PICNIC. Frederick.** Our favorite spot for this event is Pine Cliff Park, where there is a lovely pavilion in the (ahem!) unlikely chance of rain. Bring binoculars, a dish to share, plate, utensils, and drink. We'll meet at 6 PM for birding and eats. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

**Harford.** Jerusalem Mill. Take a mid-week break and wander along the lush Little Gunpowder Valley. Meet at the Mill on Jerusalem Rd at 7 AM. Leader: Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net.

Calendar continued from page 21

**Patuxent.** Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

### Saturday, June 9

**Frederick.** Western Maryland. Full day. This always-popular trip will take us to Allegany and Garrett Cos in search of Henslow's Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Least and Alder Flycatchers, and much more. Leader: Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.

**HARFORD BIG DAY CHALLENGE** "BREEDER'S CUP." **Harford.** Harford County challenges all MOS chapters to identify as many breeding birds as possible within their county's borders during this 24-hour period. One team or multiple teams may participate. Contact Matt Hafner, MH1920@aol.com or 410-971-3203, for further details.

### Tuesday, June 12

**PLANNING MEETING. Allegany/Garrett.** Meet 7 PM at Carey Run Sanctuary. Please join us as we plan the schedule for next year. Bring your ideas for speakers, field trips, and other projects. For best results, we need your ideas at or before the planning meeting!

### Thursday, June 14

**CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING. Frederick.** Everyone please come to our 2012-2013 planning meeting and volunteer to give a program or lead a field trip. We need new ideas and suggestions. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org, for info, time, and place.

**FALL PLANNING MEETING AND POT LUCK. Talbot.** Hamburgers and hot dogs supplied by the Harrisers. 6 PM at Harris home, 9069 May Apple Ln, Easton, 410-770-8303.

### Saturday, June 16

**Carroll.** Northwest Carroll County. Leader Bob Ringler, 410-303-2792. Meet 8 AM in Westminster at Town Mall parking lot between Belk and KFC to car pool.

**Patuxent.** Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. No reservations required. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

### Thursday, June 21

**Patuxent.** Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

### Sunday, June 24

**PICNIC. Washington.** 4 PM at Washington Monument SP. Bring a place setting, drink, and a dish to share. Call 301-797-8454 for info.

### Saturday, June 30

**SUMMER PICNIC AT AMY HOFFMAN'S. Carroll.** 1 PM. Another chance to talk birds, eat, drink, and have fun with fellow birders. RSVP to Amy Hoffman, 410-549-3598, if you plan to attend.

### Sunday, July 22

**Harford.** Bombay Hook NWR. The premier location on the East Coast for shorebird migration. Meet at 7 AM at the 155/95 P&R. Bring a picnic lunch. A comfort/fast food breakfast stop will be made before arriving at the park. The leader is Dave Larkin (410-569-8319; larkin3001@comcast.net).

### Saturday, July 28

**Harford.** Hummingbird Banding. See our smallest birds up close as host Les Eastman and Bander Bruce Peterjohn trap and band Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Eastman residence. For directions, contact Les: 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

### Saturday, August 4

**Patuxent.** Delaware Bay. Meet at Bowie P&R at 7 AM. All day trip to the Delaware Bay to experience the great concentrations of migratingshorebirds. Leader TBD. For more info, contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744.

### Saturday, August 11

**Harford.** Hummingbird Happy Hour. Enjoy your favorite snack and beverage while watching dozens of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Meet at the Eastman house at 5 PM. For directions, contact Les: 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

### Saturday, August 18

**Baltimore.** Bombay Hook NWR. Full-day trip for herons, wide variety of migrating shorebirds, including avocets. Be prepared for heat and biting insects. Minimal walking. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695, Exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9:15 AM at the Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217, 443-904-6314 (m), or pete\_webb@juno.com.

### Monday, August 20

**Tri-County.** Poplar Island. Contact Carol Broderick, 410-742-8920, for meeting time and location.

### Saturday, August 25

**Harford.** Harford Shorebird Roundup. Explore several Harford County shorelines to see a variety of shorebirds and waterfowl. Beginners interested in learning the basics of shorebird identification as well as experienced watchers searching for rarities will enjoy this morning trip. Meet at the south end of Fisherman's Park below Conowingo Dam at 7 AM. Other possible shorebird hotspots we may visit include Aldino, Perryman Park, Swan Harbor Farm, and the marina at Tydings Park. The leaders are experienced shorebirders: Dave Webb (410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net) and John Gallo.

**Montgomery.** Delaware Coastal Areas. Joint trip with ANS. Full day at Bombay Hook, Little Creek, Logan Tract, etc. Shorebirds, marsh birds, and some songbirds. Bring pack lunch. Meet 8 AM at Bombay Hook Visitor Center parking lot. Make reservation (15-person limit) with John Bjerke, 240-401-1643. Cyndie Loeper will co-lead.

**H** Indicates Field Trip



**Sunday, August 26**

**PICNIC.** Washington. 4 PM at Camp Harding. Bring a place setting, drink, lawn chair, and a dish to share. Call 301-797-8454 for info.

**Wednesday, August 29**

**Howard.** Poplar Island. Poplar Island is an environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller. When completed, it will provide approximately 570 acres of wetland and 570 acres of upland habitat. It is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman Island. Scopes helpful. Cormorants, herons, egrets, shorebirds, gulls, and terns expected. Facilities available. Reservations required. Strictly limited to 24. Leader: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net, 410-772-8424. Contact Joe to sign up and for add'l details.

**Saturday, September 1**

**Cecil.** Turkey Point Migrants and Hawk Watch Kickoff. Join us for the traditional launch of the Turkey Point Hawk Watch, which runs every day from Labor Day weekend through Thanksgiving. Plus, a walk through the woods and fields for migrant songbirds. Be prepared for a round-trip hike to the Point, a distance of about two miles. The pace will be leisurely. Most of the walking is on a gravel road with good footing, but there are hilly sections. Wear comfortable walking shoes/boots. Bring drinks and/or snacks. Meet 7 AM at the Turkey Point parking lot. Trip leader: Sean "Bird Dog" McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

**Howard.** Butterflies through Binoculars. Lake Elkhorn Powerline Vegetation Management Study tract. Meet 9:30 AM at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. No facilities. Leader: Dick Smith, 410-997-7439.

**Saturday, September 8**

**MOS BOARD MEETING.** Hosted by Allegany/Garret Bird Club at Rocky Gap SP. For info, contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, at janetbill@prodigy.net.

## UPDATES TO MARYLAND'S RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

At the March 3 meeting of the MOS Board, Jim McCann of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources reported on draft revisions to the state RTE list. Each species that breeds in Maryland is given a state conservation status, which ranges from S-1 (extremely rare in Maryland) to S-5 (common in Maryland). Rare species are generally those that are classified as S-1 to S-3. Species may also have a state legal protection status, which can be In Need of Conservation, Threatened, Endangered, or Endangered Extirpated. Criteria include breeding status, population trends, conservation measures in place, habitat, and geographic range. Of a total of 227 bird species on the list, 16 are being considered for a change in their legal status in Maryland. Notable changes include:

- **Golden-winged Warbler:** currently S-3 and no legal status, under consideration for S-2 and In Need of Conservation
- **Common Tern:** currently S-4 and no legal status, under consideration for S-1 and Endangered
- **Blackburnian Warbler:** currently S-1/S-2 and listed as Threatened, under consideration for S-3 and no legal status (to be delisted)
- **Saltmarsh Sparrow:** currently S-3 and no legal status, under consideration for S-2 and In Need of Conservation
- **Least Tern:** currently S-2 and Threatened, under consideration for In Need of Conservation
- **Barn Owl:** currently S-3 and no legal status, under consideration for S-2 and In Need of Conservation
- **Henslow's Sparrow:** currently S-1/S-2 and Threatened, under consideration for S-2 and In Need of Conservation

More information on the current list can be found at [www.dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Plants\\_Wildlife/espaa.asp](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Plants_Wildlife/espaa.asp). Look for an article on this topic in the fall when the proposed list of legal status changes will be available for public comment. Meantime, for more information, questions, or comments, please contact Jim McCann at [jmccann@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:jmccann@dnr.state.md.us) (301-689-7105) or Gwen Brewer [gbrewer@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:gbrewer@dnr.state.md.us) (410-260-8558).

### Book Review *continued from page 24*

items as Taxonomy, Environmental Factors, and Conservation.

The bulk of the book (more than 400 pages) consists of Species Accounts for 76 taxa, grouped as follows: Petrels including Shearwaters, Gadfly Petrels, and Other Petrels; Albatrosses including North Pacific Albatrosses and Vagrant Albatrosses; and Storm-Petrels. The latter are further subdivided into two families, essentially "northern" and "southern" groups. Each individual account starts with an Identification Summary followed by Taxonomy, Names, Status & Distribution, and the all-important Field Identification. (It should be noted that some names may be unfamiliar, e.g., the use of "Steller's Albatross" instead of "Short-tailed

Albatross.") Howell's own extensive field experience is evident in the detailed discussions of distinguishing closely related species. Maps are included for all species that occur regularly; these indicate at-sea range, migration routes, breeding range and islands, and main pattern of seasonal occurrence.

In summary, this book is a must for both the active pelagic birder and anyone simply interested in learning as much as possible about North American seabirds. An e-book is available which will facilitate having all this vital information close at hand on your next pelagic trip!

— Barry E. Cooper and  
Gail B. Mackiernan  
Montgomery Bird Club



## LAST CALL

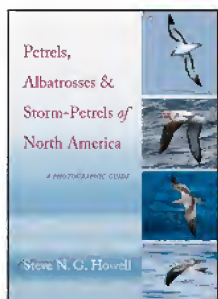
... to sign on for **May Count**, Saturday, May 12. Check the Calendar to find a Compiler near you.

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Petrels, Albatrosses & Storm-Petrels of North America. A Photographic Guide**, by Steve N. G. Howell • Princeton University Press, 2012.



This is an impressive, comprehensive work on the Procelliformes, the diverse group of pelagic birds known as *tubenoses*. With it, Steve Howell has produced what is sure to become the standard reference book on North American tubenoses for the foreseeable future. He sets a new standard by explaining in clear, precise terms identification criteria for this

challenging group. His text is backed up by an unmatched selection of high quality photographs depicting most species in a variety of plumages.

At over four pounds in weight and in excess of 500 pages, this is not a field guide but a detailed reference book. It covers North America from Alaska to Panama and from the Maritimes to the Caribbean. More than 70 taxa are treated, including a number of subtropical species that are very rare or absent from U.S. waters (and from most North American field guides). Several of these are putative splits not yet formally recognized as full species. As Howell points out, many species are in a state of flux. For example, under the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel complex, he indicates that recent studies of genetics and vocalization indicate nine distinct populations (including five in the Atlantic) with the majority distinctive enough to be recognized as full species. However,

identification criteria for these birds at sea are still in their infancy.

As many of us know from firsthand experience, the pelagic environment can be extremely difficult for birders, what with rolling seas, wet optics, and a swaying boat. Viewing conditions make field identification challenging, especially when only slight differences exist between species. However, advances in digital photography have greatly improved our understanding of this difficult group. Howell takes full advantage of this technology in his photographic sections; the book's photographs are, in a word, superb.

The section on "How to Use This Book" and the Introduction are must reading. They contain a wealth of information, including such esoteric concepts as "wing-loading" (the relationship between wing area and body mass that predicts how various species fly under different wind conditions). The Introduction begins with a detailed discussion of the major ocean currents and features. Tables provide a guide to pelagic species associated with these different water types, for both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. A general section on field identification of tubenoses follows. Howell rightly cautions that while this information may seem overwhelming, time spent watching pelagic species and applying this knowledge are key to identifying them with confidence. Other introductory topics include such

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